

News Release



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Effective July 15, 2003

New OHV Noise Regulations To be Strictly Enforced

SACRAMENTO -- Effective July 15, 2003, new noise regulations will be strictly enforced for all off-highway motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles that are operated at all State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs), state officials announced today.

The new regulations brings California's off-road noise emissions levels down from one of the worst in the nation to one of the best, reducing the maximum decibel level standard from 101 decibels to 96 decibels.

"The importance of this can't be underscored enough. Noise is the most threatening aspect to California's Off-Highway Vehicle program," said Tony Perez, Chief of California State Parks' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. "That is why the Division intends to be very aggressive in dealing with this issue."

He said, "We've already started testing and the results so far have been very positive. After 10 months of testing 3,190 off-highway vehicles at the Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area, the Division found that 84 percent of the vehicles tested passed."

The following noise requirements will be strictly enforced:

- If your OHV was manufactured before January 1, 1986, the noise limit is 101 decibels.
- If your OHV was manufactured after January 1, 1986, the noise limit is 96 decibels.
- If your "competition" OHV was manufactured before January 1, 1998, the noise limit is 101 decibels.
- If your "competition" OHV was manufactured after January 1, 1998, the noise limit is 96 decibels. According to the standards, "competition" off-highway vehicles are those that are not manufactured to comply with EPA noise or California emission standards. For information on the designation of your OHV, refer to your owner's manual or contact your local dealership.

The new noise law is a key element of AB 2274, signed into law by Governor Gray Davis in September 2002 and which went into effect January 1, 2003. AB 2274 represents the most sweeping reform of California's off-highway vehicle program in its 30-year history. It drew bipartisan support in the Legislature, and won the support of both environmental organizations and off-road recreation groups.

State Parks' OHMVR Division manages the largest program of its type in the U.S. with the strictest environmental standards of any OHV program in the nation.

California's OHV program was created in 1971 as part of a statewide effort to manage a vigorously growing recreational sport. Today, it's estimated that 14.2 percent of all California households – about 3.5 million people – participate in OHV opportunities. There have been more than 100 laws related to California's OHV program since 1971.

In addition to six main State Vehicular Recreation Areas, the OHV Division also manages a winter recreation program and an extensive grants and cooperative agreements program. More than \$16 million was allocated in the 2002/2003-grant cycle to local and federal agencies for everything from local law enforcement to trail grooming, restrooms and paved parking.

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